**Working around wastewater**

A member of COG has been working on over pumping of storm and wastewater during an emergency job  
A contractor has been working to prime a trash pump and during so Wastewater   
has been splash on the COG team member who has subsequently become sick.

**Risks**

Workers who work with wastewater can be at risk from exposure to disease-causing pathogens (bugs) without the correct controls in place. Workers may also be exposed to these from working in wastewater or cleaning up needles etc. as part of maintenance work and can be at risk from contracting serious infections such as:

* Hepatitis A
* Hepatitis B
* Typhoid
* Tetanus
* Polio

**Controls**

Vaccinations:

Immunisation uses your body’s natural defence mechanism, the immune response, to build resistance to specific infections. If you have been immunised and you come into contact with that disease, your immune system will respond to prevent you developing the disease.

PPE:

* **Goggles or Appropriate safety glasses:** to protect eyes from splashes of wastewater
* **Protective face mask or splash-proof face shield:** to protect nose and mouth from splashes of wastewater
* **Liquid-repellent coveralls:** to keep human wastewater off clothing
* **Waterproof gloves:**to prevent exposure to wastewater
* **Rubber boots:** to prevent exposure to wastewater

**What if I am exposed to wastewater?**

If a worker is exposed to infectious wastewater / liquid waste while at work the below process should be followed:

1. Immediately seek medical advice about the potential pathogens and methods of exposure, notify your team leader / manager and they will organise an appointment with your parent companies doctor during work time and as a part of the escalation process COG’s H&S advisor must be notified as well.
   1. Provide information to the doctor on exposure event (inhalation, ingestion, open wound)
   2. The doctor will be able to provide advice on any treatment and likely symptoms
2. Record in CAMs under Safety > Health & Wellbeing > Biohazard
3. Exposed worker must not work in or around drinking water until symptom free for at least 48 hours: however they can do other work tasks
4. If further symptoms develop then further medical advice must be sought to determine whether the symptoms are likely from the work place exposure
5. If symptoms are determined to be due to workplace exposure then a WorkSafe notification must be considered; contact your COG’s H&S advisor for advice
6. Update CAMs with time off or Regulator Notification if applicable

**FAQ** -

Can you pass the infection on to others?

Yes, this is why it is important to be immunised to reduce this risk. If you become sick you can be infectious for up to 3 days, this is why anyone showing symptoms must not work on the drinking water network for at least 48 hours of being symptom free.

How can I prevent any infection and spreading it on to others?

* Go through a programme of immunisation for serious infections
* Don’t prepare or handle food for at least 48 hours after the symptoms stop.
* Immediately remove and wash any contaminated clothes and bedding using detergent and hot water.
* Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces by using a bleach-based disinfectant.
* Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry.

Long term effects:   
  
Long term exposure to wastewater without controls such as immunisation and PPE will increase your chances of becoming sick with a serious infection such as Hepatitis.

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| **Safety Alert Delivery** |  | |
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